

CALIFORNIA'S CAPITOL – GREG LUCAS

[A Guest Post from Assemblyman Wes Chesbro of Eureka](#)

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Today, June 23, my Sacramento office has taken one step closer to reflecting the diversity of California and the communities I represent. We've hired, full-time, our WE Include intern, Jayleen Johnson.

The WE Include program was created by California First Lady Maria Shriver and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to better integrate individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities into professional work environments, where they learn skills and forge friendships.

Maria Shriver has been a tireless advocate for persons with developmental disabilities. Jayleen exemplifies the First Lady's campaign to change the negative stereotypes into positive images, which Jayleen exemplifies.

When Jayleen was an intern, she performed administrative and office support duties as well as promoting the WE Include program at the Capitol. During her internship, she opened our eyes and minds even wider to the capabilities of people with disabilities.

Best Buddies International was founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, and has grown in 21 years from the original chapter to an organization with more than 1,500 chapters on middle school, high school and college campuses in the United States and different parts of the world.

The mission of Best Buddies is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A big chunk of their fundraising stems from cycling trips of up to 100 miles. In California, the route snakes down Highway 1 from Carmel Valley to San Simeon.

The First Lady has recruited a group of riders — Team Maria — who will participate in the "Best Buddies Challenge" on Sept. 11.

Because Jayleen has been such a positive addition to our office, I encourage everyone to learn more about WE Include and Best Buddies International, and participate in the programs.

<http://californiascapitol.com/blog/?p=3233>